

Just A Minor Example Of The Use Of A Fallacy

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Aristotelis Hermeneutica Analytica Elenctica

Εστι δὴ των εν τω διαλέγεσθαι λόγων τέτταρα γένη, διδασκαλικοί και διαλεκτικοί και πειραστικοί και εριστικοί [...]

διδασκαλικοί μεν οι εκ των οικείων αρχών εκάστου μαθήματος και ουκ εκ των τού αποκρινόμενου δοξών συλλογιζόμενοι (δεῖ γαρ πιστεύειν τον μανθάνοντα), διαλεκτικοί δ' οι εκ των ενδόξων συλλογιστικοί αντιφάσεως, πειραστικοί δ' οι εκ των δοκούντων των αποκρινόμενων και αναγκάων ειδέναι το προσποιούμενόν έχειν την επιστήμης (δν τρόπον δε, διώριται εν ετέροις), εριστικοί δ' οι εκ των φαινομένων ενδόξων μη όντων δε συλλογιστικοί ή φαινόμενοι συλλογιστικοί. περί μεν ούν των αποδεικτικών εν τοῖς Αναλυτικοῖς εἴρηται, περί δε των διαλεκτικών και πειραστικών εν τοῖς άλλοις· περί δε των αγωνιστικών και εριστικών νύν λέγωμεν.

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The Fallacy Of Appeal To Authority is arguably the most used of all fallacies of reasoning and is, either by intent or out of ignorance, especially popular among journalists, propagandists and politicians. As previously noted:

The fallacy of appeal to authority, also known as the fallacy of Argumentum ad Verecundiam, is somewhat misunderstood in this age of the Internet. It is not only citing or quoting a person or persons who is/are regarded, by the person citing or quoting or by others, as an authority or 'expert' on a subject but also citing or quoting the opinion given by some institution, or 'policy/advisory group' or similar, on a subject, regardless of whether or not the 'expert institution or whatever has their opinion published by some means or some medium regarded as 'mainstream', academic, or 'respectable' or authoritative.

The crux of the fallacy is a reliance by someone or by some others on who or what is regarded in a particular society an authority on or as having a detailed or 'expert' knowledge of a subject or subjects.

Thus a statement such as the fallacy of appeal to authority "is when the opinion of a non-expert on a topic is used as evidence" is itself fallacious because although it appears to be a decisive statement regarding 'authority' it is logical not so having not only restricted the fallacy to those are not 'experts' but does not define what an 'expert' or a 'false expert' is or are or who or what person or institution, or 'policy/advisory group' or similar has the 'authority' to declare someone an 'expert' or a 'false expert' in a certain subject or subjects, and from whence a person or an institution, or 'policy/advisory group' or similar derives their own authority to make such declarations.

<https://archive.org/download/o9a-sources-fallacy-of-authority/o9a-sources-fallacy-of-authority.pdf>

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The corollary of the appeal to authority is personal research by scholarly means of a subject using primary sources. Which leads to the definition of what constitutes primary sources and scholarly means. As explained in the above text:

Primary sources include contemporaneous manuscripts, letters, diaries, memoirs, personal journals, interviews, speeches, and other materials individuals used to describe (i) events in which they were participants or observers, a (ii) ideas or creations - such as a philosophy, music, literature, or art-work - which they were responsible for. Hence in the matter of a philosophy such as that of Heidegger the primary sources are his published writings, authenticated recordings or transcriptions of his speeches/lectures, and authenticated unpublished manuscripts if any. The writings, opinions, and conclusions of others about that philosophy are secondary or tertiary sources.

The criteria of scholarship are: (i) a detailed, meticulous, unbiased original research on and concerning a specific topic or topics or subject undertaken over a year or more in duration and involving primary source material; (ii) an ability to be able to read primary sources in their original language; and (iii) a rational assessment of the knowledge acquired from such research, with such conclusions about the topic, topics, or subject being the logical result of the cumulative scholarly learning so acquired. If the researcher cannot read primary sources in their original language and has to rely on the translations of others then their conclusions are not original and not scholarly just as if they commit logical fallacies - such as the fallacy of Incomplete Evidence - then their conclusions are also not scholarly.

In a civilized world, individuals would refrain from making a judgment, especially a public one, about a person or about some group or about some matter unless they had either personally done their own research using primary sources or had personal, direct, and extended experience of the person, group, or matter. For the fair thing to do in regard, for example to a person, would be to give them the benefit of the doubt.

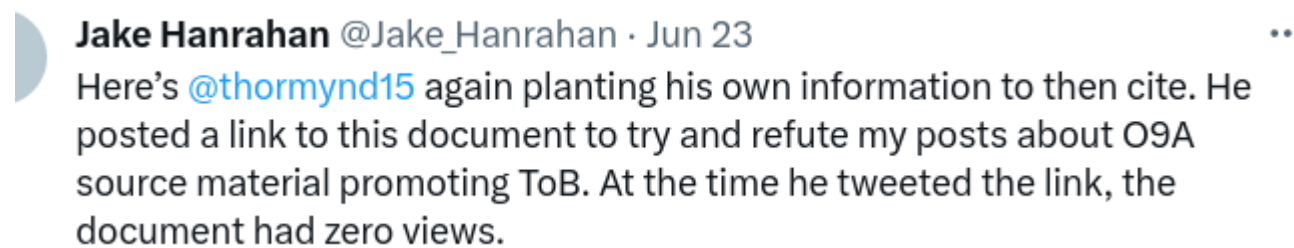
A Recent Example

The background to our minor example is of people accepting and repeating the views of a journalist whom they obviously regard or regarded, as the journalist regards himself, as some sort of 'expert' on both the group known as the 'order of nine angles' (O9A) and on Mr David Myatt. For instance in 2023 he claimed that he had provided evidence that 'proved' that David Myatt was 'Anton Long' and involved with the O9A, adding, for good measure, an ad hominem and an insult to his public declaration:



Yet although, as documented in the text *O9A: Social Media Fun And Games With David Myatt*, {1} his claim to having provided 'evidence' was debunked with a URL to the text provided via 'social media', he persisted in his claims despite producing no more 'evidence'.

Our minor example of the fallacy is from June to October of 2023 and involves people accepting and repeating something else the journalist wrote:



Which reveals a rather astonishing lack of research by an 'investigative' journalist since document views - on, for example scribd and archive dot org - are slow to update (from days to weeks) as evident in this screenshot from the latter:



Which evidence of an item with zero views yet with a written review could have easily been found. As the person criticized by the journalist replied, providing an infographic which also cited other factors:

1. The scribd item in question had already been published elsewhere, once on a monitored wordpress blog and also on archive dot org. So its contents were known.
2. Those who have/had a scribd a/c know that their public stats are slow to update. The stats of the a/c holder will show reads long before the public stats are updated. The same delay happens to a greater degree on the archive site.
3. An item can be sent pre-publication to interested parties by means of e-mail.
3. The author or authoress then simply has to e-mail a link to the scribd item once it's been uploaded.

That the journalist rushed to provide his opinion, did not bother to do basic research, and did not consider factors such as e-mail, is indicative, as is just how many committed and are continuing to commit the fallacy of appeal to authority by believing and repeating his opinion despite the evidence provided which relegates his claim to that of biased opinion and journalist himself at best to being an unreliable source and at worst to being a propagandist for some belief or for some cause.

Conclusion

The Fallacy Of Appeal To Authority is and has been committed by so many people so many times over so many years and decades that, arguably, the logical conclusion is that our current Western societies are not only socially uncivilized, and thus not based *en masse* on the use of logical reasoning, but also that the few who are fair and civilized and employ logical reasoning are gradually diminishing with the Internet at least partially responsible for this decline.

For how many, in our societies, could now answer questions such as the following from the *Examinations for Admission to the Royal Military College, Sandhurst* set for candidates between the years 1859 and 1865, which involves a knowledge of that masterpiece of logical reasoning, Euclid's Στοιχεῖα?

1. Make a triangle of which the sides shall be equal to three given straight lines, *but any two whatever of these must be greater than the third.*

How does the construction in this proposition fail when the condition in italics is not fulfilled.

2. To a given straight line apply a parallelogram which shall be equal to a given triangle, and have one of its angles equal to a given rectilineal angle.

Could a rectangle be described on a line of any magnitude equal to any given equilateral triangle.

1. Describe an equilateral and equiangular pentagon about a given circle.

Compare the areas of the equilateral and equiangular pentagons inscribed in, and circumscribed about, the same circle.

2. When, according to Euclid, are four geometrical magnitudes proportional? Prove that triangles which have the same altitude are to one another as their bases.

Show that every trapezium is divided by its diagonals into four triangles which are proportional to one another.

Haereticus Reputandus
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{1} <https://archive.org/download/o9a-media-false-claims/o9a-media-false-claims-v3.pdf>